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F. E. MADDOX

The passing of medievalism...

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The Passing of Medievalism in Religion

By Rev.
F. E. MADDOX

A series of sermons delivered in
First Presbyterian Church, Texar-
kana, Ark., issuing in a heresy trial
before Ouachita Presbytery, July
14, 1908.

THE TEXARKANIAN
TEXARKANA, ARK.
1908

PUBLISHERS' NOTICE

During the Spring of 1908 Rev. F. E. Maddox, pastor of the First Presbyterian church, Texarkana, Ark., preached ten sermons on "The Passing of Medievalism in Religion," A synopsis of each sermon was published, as a matter of news, in The Daily Texarkanian. On account of the intellectuality of the preacher and his advanced views on the things that are fundamental in religion, a wide interest was created in the sermons. Many calls for papers containing the sermons were made, long after each issue was exhausted. For the purpose of meeting a popular demand we secured permission of Mr. Maddox to reprint the entire series in book form. This is the first edition.

THE VALLIANT PUBLISHING CO.

(Publishers of The Daily Texarkanian.)

Texarkana, Ark., July 10, 1908.

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FOREWORD

We live in an age of theological fermentation. Changes are taking place in religious thought not less radical than in the days of the reformation and a process of reconstruction and readjustment is going on which is as widespread as it is revolutionary. We are moving away from some of the traditional positions of theology which for centuries have been regarded as bulwarks of evangelical faith, and both the pulpit and the pew of the present day are breaking with exploded theories and outgrown traditions. Christianity is being christianized and christian thought is being liberated from medieval and paganistic perversions. Much that is in the old creeds has been outgrown and the spirit of revision which is abroad today expunging and pruning old formularies is the result of a demand of the modern mind to readjust the old faith to the new facts. The difficulties of the modern man are not with religion, but outgrown views of it. The break among the educated is not with the truth of the Bible, but medieval interpretations of it.

The present discourses were born in a struggle to find a firmer footing amid the flux of theological opinion. They are a feeble attempt to restate some of the fundamental teachings of christianity in terms of common experience, and from the viewpoint of a modern man. The spirit pervading them is that of an earnest inquirer after truth, and the method pursued is that of accepting and proclaiming truth whatever its variance from orthodox positions or its effect on formulated dogma.

No one is more conscious of the defects of the whole series than the author. They were prepared from week to week amid the press of pastoral duties and handed to the press in the crude form in which they appear. No claim of absolute originality is made nor is acknowledgement always made when using the thoughts of others, since in most instances the substance has been expressed in my own language.

Many expressions of appreciation of good accomplished by the series have come to me from my own congregation and friends and this book is now sent forth with the hope that its contents may do greater good to other and larger audiences.

F. E. MADDOX.

Texarkana, Ark., July 10, 1908.

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CONTENTS

	Page
What is Intellectual Honesty Regarding Religious Questions?	9
Who is God, and Why Should We Serve Him? . .	15
What is the Value of the Bible?	23
Does the Grave End All?	31
Is Prayer Reasonable?	37
Who Was Christ?	45
How Are We Saved?	53
Who is the Author of Sin?	59
What Was the Mission of Christ?	67
What is Religion?	73

WHAT IS INTELLECTUAL HONESTY REGARDING RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS?

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore, many of them believed also of honorable women, which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.—Acts 17:11-12.

NOTHING so inspires a public speaker as a responsive audience, a congregation of thoughtful men and women who receive his message with open minds. And nothing so thrills the soul of an audience as a speaker who recognizes their mental alertness, and discovers at once their intellectual plane. What inspires the thought of the speaker, as a rule, stimulates the thinking of the hearer; and all other things being equal, eloquent hearing makes eloquent speaking.

That was a supreme hour in the experience of the apostle Paul, when at Berea he stood before an audience of men and women with open minds. They brought to the occasion a frankness and an alertness which thrilled his soul. They received his message with readiness of mind, and examined his utterances to ascertain whether or not they squared with the teaching of the scriptures. It is not supposed because they received his message with readiness and willingness that they accepted his teaching without question. They took nothing for granted, but sifted the facts with open minds and impartial judgments. In matters of faith and religious opinion they reserved the right to private judgment, and were unwilling to yield their intellectual autonomy to any individual. Their mental attitude toward any man's teaching was that of frankness and open-mindedness, and instead of accepting dogmatic assertions, without question, they examined the facts for themselves.

This is intellectual honesty in the settlement of religious questions. And this is the disposition which is

most in harmony with the spirit of our time. The age in which we live is a critical one, and the scientific method by which the truth is tested, in any department of thought whatsoever, demands that we examine the facts before we draw our conclusions.

There are two classes of people in every community; and there are two methods of dealing with truth. One class receives it by acquiescence, and swallows the conclusions of others, without thought or investigation. The other class accepts nothing for which it cannot see some reason, and suspends its judgment on any question until the facts have been examined.

I remark first: One mark of intellectual honesty is to approach religious questions with an open mind. Every man ought to be eager to know the truth, and ought to open his mind to new light from any source. This is always the attitude of the thinking mind. The thinking man is not afraid of new light, from any source whatsoever, and he always looks facts squarely in the face. Only the ignorant man is content to rest in his ignorance. Children may be awed into silence by tradition and authority, but thinking men, never. The alert man wants to know; and he should know, if it is possible for him to know. No man can act intelligently who does not think sanely. Whoever declines to admit new light on subjects of religion, or allows himself to be blinded by prejudice in drawing his conclusions, commits intellectual suicide. Inane credulity is more dangerous than intellectual skepticism. We should never forget that no system of thought is yet perfect or complete, and there is no finality in our conception of the great doctrines of religion. The profound truths of religion are neither apprehended nor comprehended in a day. We do not perceive God's mind, nor apprehend his plan, at a single glance, though they be revealed in a book. With all our boasted learning, the race is still standing back in the twilight of knowledge.

No subject is exhausted on which there is difference of opinion. It takes time for the race to grow to the level of some great ideas. On questions where difference of opinion is possible, honesty demands that judgment be suspended until all the facts are in. Where truth may be seen from different angles, each man's opinion must be tested by its viewpoint. Narrowness, as a rule, results from want of light; and want of light is, not infrequently,

the result of seeing the truth from only one angle.

Unfortunately, open-mindedness is not the attitude of the majority of men. On the contrary, most men are all but impervious to new ideas. They prefer to move on in the old ruts, and rather than be disturbed in their beliefs, they continue to swing in the old orbit. They not only will not receive new light, but oppose it. It is a historic fact that every new truth, whether religious or scientific, has fought its way to recognition in the teeth of men who thought themselves conservators of truth. As a rule, men who oppose new light most vehemently, are slaves to tradition. The narrow man is most dogmatic, and most intolerant of breadth and open-mindedness. He thinks he is doing God service when he keeps the feet of the race in old paths. He would pour all men through one mould, and force all to see truth from one angle, and excommunicate all who do not swallow his creed. Such a man is shackled by prejudice and fossilized by bigotry. Orthodoxy with him is little more than mental slavery. He approaches truth, not with an open mind, but with his mind bound hand and foot with pre-conceived opinions. He has been grooved by religious education and wedded to biased views by personal interest. He has been blinded to the larger aspects of truth, because he has always seen truth from only one angle.

We live in an age of reconstruction. We must adjust the old faith to the new facts. It is not maintained that truth has changed, but our understanding of it has. All will concede that the world is wiser today touching religious questions than ever before. We know the facts of religion more thoroughly, and are better acquainted with the will of God, than were the patriarchs in Abraham's time, or the prophets in Isaiah's time, or the disciples in the time of Christ. We have an accumulated wealth of facts other ages had no means of knowing. The mind of the race is more mature; the facilities for knowing are better; and light on moral problems is clearer than at any other time in the history of the race, or the development of truth. Theology is being reconstructed in the light of larger learning; the Bible is being illuminated by the critical research of men of devout spirits and master minds, and religion is being revitalized and restated in terms of human experience.

It is the part of wisdom to break with exploded theories

and outgrown traditions. The time has come when men must think for themselves, and the man who thinks must open his mind. Facing the facts squarely and honestly, we have nothing to lose but everything to gain. In a time like this, narrowness is a sign of ignorance, and intolerance a relic of mediaevalism.

I remark again: Another mark of intellectual honesty is to reserve the right of private judgment in the interpretation of truth. Time was when men submitted to ecclesiastical authority in matters of faith, without question or resentment. They had no opinions of their own, or, if they had them, they dared not express them. What preachers said from the pulpit was put into their mouths; and what people believed in the pew was found in the creeds. To think for oneself was arrogance and blasphemy. To dissent from accepted dogma was an affront to ecclesiastical authority, punishable by death or excommunication. The masses of the people took their conception of religion from the creeds and schools. They knew nothing of the source of their faith or the grounds of dogmatic assertions. To the average man the Bible was a sealed book, and his knowledge of its contents was received secondhand. Religious instruction was dogmatic and assent to accepted beliefs compulsory. One must believe what he was taught, whether he saw the reason of it or not, and he must not believe anything else. A proof text, selected from any portion of the scriptures, was ready for any dogmatic assertion; and a thing was so, not because it was so, but because the Bible said so.

But it will be seen that no man can be intellectually honest and be a machine or a parrot. Intellectual autonomy is the highest birthright of man. The right of private judgment is the genius of protestantism. The reformation is a historic monument over the grave of intellectual bondage in matters of religion. That great event in history declared to all succeeding generations, once for all, that every man has a right to read the Bible for himself and interpret it as he understands it.

I hold that we are responsible for our thinking as our living. It is not only our privilege, but our duty to search and see if accepted beliefs are so. This is not arrogance, but obedience to the highest law of our nature. The thinking man of our time knows no intellectual oligarchies or monopolies on truth, and he recognizes none. The

day has come when preachers and ecclesiastical courts no longer think for the educated. Even the average man has felt the pulse of a liberal education, and the broadening influences of culture, and feels impelled to examine the grounds of his faith. It is not strange that authority has yielded before individual opinion. Men of today boldly accept the responsibility of their own doubt or dissent.

We must search and see if things are so, without bias or prejudice. We should approach religion as we do any other subject. We should consider its claims alone upon their merits. We should read the Bible as we do any other book; not because it is just like any other book, but because we must test its truth as we test any other truth. We should believe the truth of the Bible, not because it is in the Bible, but because it is true. We should make up our minds after we have examined the facts, not before we have seen them. Too often we form our theory from our creed and go to the Bible to prove it. This is to take what we believe to the Bible, instead of deriving what we believe from it. There can be no honest search of the scriptures to ascertain their teaching, with one's mind already made up. Intellectual honesty demands that we be fair with our facts, as well as our theories. If our age seems skeptical and iconoclastic, we need not be surprised. The reason is not far to seek. It lies in the fact that the method of theology has been so unscientific, and men have read into the Bible what they could not read out of it. The difficulties, however, are not with religion, but outgrown views of it. The break of the modern mind is not with the truth of the Bible, but paganistic and mediaeval interpretations of it. The fact is, men are as ready to believe today as ever, but they are less ready than ever before to believe any and everything.

The last mark of intellectual honesty is: Once we know and believe the truth, we should make performance square with perception. The majority of men are more eager to know the truth than to live it. As a rule, men fight harder to make and preserve their creeds than to build and buttress their characters. With many people, opinion is fundamental, but life only incidental. They read their Bibles devoutly and habitually, and safeguard their orthodoxy scrupulously at the same time that they are animated by any other than a Christian spirit, and live any other than a religious life. Everyone knows that it is

one thing to believe something and quite another to be something. It is much easier to illuminate one's thought than to incarnate that thought in one's life. Many a man is convicted with the truth, but not converted by it. Honesty demands that we live the truth when once we know it. We cannot afford to do less than what we ought to do. We cannot do more than we know to do. Knowledge of right puts us under everlasting obligation to do right. Truth is a trust we cannot honestly keep without turning it into life. It is not perception nor preception that we need most, but performance. We should make our living square with our learning. Who thinks high ought to live high. A man ought to be as clean in his life as he is clear in his thought. Honesty demands that broad, sane, robust thinking be incarnated in upright, clean, manly living.

WHO IS GOD, AND WHY SHOULD WE SERVE HIM?

What is the Almighty that we should serve Him?—Job 21:15.

THIS question was asked in a spirit of derision and irreverence by men who were neither atheists nor agnostics. They asked it, not because they doubted the existence of God, or were convinced that He could not be known; but because they questioned the reality of His claim upon their lives, and doubted the propriety of rendering service to Him. Their idea of Him was a peculiar one. They looked upon Him as a sort of uncomfortable presence about their lives, and desired to rid themselves, not only of any consciousness of Him in their thought, but to disclaim any obligation to Him in their lives. They pictured Him as a sort of despot and monstrosity, and his service more a burden than a blessing. Thinking of him as they did, we are not surprised that they should treat him and the whole subject of religion with contempt and indifference. Their attitude toward Him was due, partly, to the erroneous conception of Him which they entertained; and partly, to the wickedness of their lives.

With us the question assumes a more serious form, and if we are prepared to ask it with more intelligence, we should also ask it with more reverence. Who is God, and why should we serve Him? This is the most important question in all the circle of religious thought, and one which every thinking man must ask, at one time or another. It is the very substance and center of all religion and is fundamental to any intelligent conception of Christian theology. Tell me what your conception of God is, and I will work out your doctrine of man, of salvation, of the atonement, of forgiveness of sin and of the future life. Regard God as a hindrance to your happiness, and He can never be a help to you. Consider Him an uncomfortable presence about your life and you will not

want Him near. Look upon Him as a being always in court, and a spy on your track, and you will feel yourself a fugitive, always fleeing from justice.

Seen from the angle of paganism, He is a despot; seen in Christ, He is a father. The enlightened Christian consciousness of our time is rapidly recovering the God Christ came to reveal.

I remark first: Every man paints his own picture of God. What He is and who He is, depends on the viewpoint from which He is seen, and the conception that one forms of Him. The idea of God has been an age long and gradual evolution. It has developed with the development of the race, and grown with the growth of knowledge. Crude in the extreme was this idea in early ages. In the age of brute force, the Greeks saw Him a huge Titan, with gigantic proportions and colossal strength. Leaving Hercules, Zeus and Jupiter behind, monarchial ages saw Him a mighty monarch, seated on a throne of marble. When power became supreme and laws were formulated, He became a stern judge, caring more for His laws and penalties than for His children. When intellect arose, He became infinite mind, His intellect a cold, logic engine, scintillating with thoughts as bright as the sun, but cold as ice. Greatness consisted in hugeness. He inspired reverence by exciting fear. His holiness and greatness were magnified by contrasting them with man's meanness and littleness. Mystery was His place of abode. Self aggrandizement His only ambition. Favoritism to an elect few and damnation and destruction of the many was the genius of His government.

Paganism has left its impress nowhere, as it has on the idea of God. Religion is still tinged with feudalism, and the castle with its prince reveling in ease and luxury, still represents God. To the thinking of many He is still little more than a monster, moving through the world, mowing down forests, breaking up homes and killing little children. His government is little more than a despotism, where His subjects have no rights, and where they are swayed by the will of an autocrat. Even in our enlightened day, polytheism still exists, and in christian lands there are still as many gods as there are differing conceptions. With all our boasted progress, religion is still shot through with mediaevalism, and christianity has not yet been freed from paganistic perversions.

Strange as it may seem, there are many who still regard God as a being, living apart from men, and chiefly concerned about His own glory and His own self interest. He is not in the world, but away from it and above it. He is not down with men, helping them in their struggles, but away watching them, and increasing their struggles when it pleases and profits Him. It is maintained that He gets His glory, not out of the happiness of men, but their toils and struggles. His chief concern is not our welfare, but His own worth and wealth. He is a being who rules men by fear and awes them into submission by authority. He is a mighty thunderer. He sits on the throne of the universe and sways men by His majesty and awfulness. The sun is His eye; the pestilence His anger; the thunder His voice. His storms mow down forests; His winds devastate fields; His earthquakes shake down cities. He lives and rules, we are told, for His own glory. Man is not his child, now that he has wandered, but His creature and slave, and he must serve if he would live. He is keeping books with him, recording his every act, thought and word, and one day will square accounts with him. He has no claim upon his creator, and poor worm of the dust that he is, he has no right to live; but he will at least be tolerated as long as he submits to the will of the Almighty and performs his quota of service.

Imbued with such teaching as this, the impression is abroad that somehow God is opposed to man. Because His children, somewhere in the remote past strayed, He is on the war path. He is more angry than grieved over the deflection of the prodigal race. Lying in ambush on man's path, He is waiting for an opportunity to wreak vengeance on him for his waywardness. It is said His anger must be appeased before He can or will be merciful. Man was His child once, but having sinned he disinherited him, and will strike him down, unless somebody stands between them.

In this view, God is a sort of uncomfortable presence about life. The consciousness that He is around, makes us uneasy and miserable. The outstanding element in His character is vengeance, which excites fear. He is a spy on our track and a being always in court. He is either sitting in judgment, trying a case, or collecting materials for a case. Unfortunately, in the mind of many, God is not yet christianized. He is not God in Christ,

made intelligible by Christ. He is still the Jehovah of the old testament. He is the great I am of the Mosaic dispensation, thundering from Mount Sinai, before whose presence the Israelites fled as men would flee from a storm or a cyclone. He is still God eternal, invisible, unchangeable and therefore, unknowable. "He is the center of darkness, His throne is iron, His heart marble. His laws are huge implements of destruction; His penalties red-hot cannon balls, crashing along the sinner's path;" His wrath a pent up thunder storm, ready to burst on man's head.

This is the view of God which many people still entertain; and this the God many try to worship. It need scarcely be said, however, that this is not the God of the new testament. Far less is it the christian's God.

I remark second: It remained for Christ to give to the world the most radiant idea of God. The question, who God is, finds its best and fullest answer in what Christ was; what He said; what He did. Christ unveiled God, not as a selfish monarch, but a ministering father. He lifted before the world not an abstraction, cold, vague, indefinite and impersonal, moving through thought; but a person, loving and loveable, living among men. He was not a prince, reveling in ease and self-indulgence, but a tender father, caring for a family. He was not a despot, sitting on a throne, watching the struggles of wandering men, but a sympathetic savior, seeking the lost.

Seen in Christ, God is nowhere on man's track, to strike him down, but everywhere He is a shepherd, seeking him to lead him back home. In the view of Christ, God lives to minister, not to be ministered unto. Instead of being an uncomfortable presence about life, His presence makes life radiant. We never feel so safe or comfortable as when we know He is near. His face beams with kindness; His heart beats with sympathy; His touch thrills with tenderness; His voice cheers with hope. His laws are not huge implements for destruction, but are lights along man's pathway. His commands are not threats, but inspirations upward. His penalties are not cannon balls, crashing along man's track, but protections against waywardness and further sin. Christ taught that God is more grieved over man's sins than angry at his waywardness. He still regards man as His child, though a prodigal and in a far country. He has never despaired of his salvation nor abandoned hope of winning him back

to His fellowship. He needs no propitiation that He may be merciful, but in Christ, has given Himself, that He may reconcile His wandering children. He needs no one to stand between Him and His child, to stay penalty, but in Christ has thrown Himself across man's path to keep him from destruction, and is sacrificing himself to woo him from sin.

Who reads the new testament will see at once that Christ revealed God, not, as a despot, but a father. He transferred the divine idea from the schools to the domestic circle. He defined the relation of God and man in terms of the family. He appropriated the analogies of love and the associations of home, in disclosing God's character. He taught that what an earthly father would not do to his child, because it would be wrong, a heavenly father could not do, because it would be criminal. What of good an earthly father would do, God would do more because He is a heavenly father. He reasoned from good in us to the best in God, and insisted that goodness in us must be goodness in God. He stated the whole circle of religious life and thought in terms of fatherhood. He taught His disciples that prayer must be offered to the Father, and the principles of conduct are the will of the Father. He said the substance of character is likeness to the Father, and providence is mindful oversight of the Father. Repentance with Him is a return to the Father; and the future home of His children will be the Father's house.*

This, in my judgment, is the most radiant idea of God the world has yet known. It gathers up every other relation and dignifies and illuminates it. If it be objected that it loses strength because it gains in tenderness, it will be remembered that there is no real tenderness without strength. It is not meant that God is not a king and a judge, because He is a father, but first of all, and last of all and through all, He is a father. No where is God made so luminous and attractive as in Christ. Who sees Christ sees the Father. This is God, stooping to lift His fallen children back to His side. This is God descending to the plane of men, that He may lift them to His plane. This is God, living among men, that He may teach men how to live. This is God, going about, seeking the lost, to lead them back home. This is God, giving himself in

*"The Mind of the Master," Chap. XII.

sacrifice, through life and in death, as a mother gives herself for her child.

To me God is not an iceberg, but a tropic center. He is not a shadow falling across life, but sunshine, illuminating life. He comes to the world to unloose the grip of sin, as the balmy days of May come to unlock the Northern zones. He comes like the sun, not only to irradiate the world with light, but to wake to life all its latent forces and sleeping energies. He comes singing in the ears of mortal man, as sweetly as the angels sang in the ears of the sleeping shepherds at the advent. And the note He sounds is, "Peace on earth and good will to men."

Universal christendom is waking to His call. The christian world is breaking with the paganistic view of God. Mediaevalism is passing, as we get the larger view of Christ. "God is no longer a despot, but a father; the incarnation is no longer an expedient, but a consummation. The sacrifice of Christ is no longer a satisfaction, but a reconciliation. The end of grace is not standing but character; and the object of punishment is not retribution, but reclamation and regeneration."

I remark last: If it be asked now why we should serve God, the answer is found in the very relation we sustain to Him. One reason is, He needs us in working out his great world plan. He would dignify us with the privilege of being his co-laborers. But He needs our companionship, not less than our co-operation. His aim is not simply to work out a great idea or complete a great machine. The universe without his children would have as little significance for God as a house without occupants would have for us. God's interest is centered in the welfare of His family. The happiness, usefulness and harmony of His children are to Him paramount to all else. Even God cannot be happy living in selfishness and isolation. It is not a matter of indifference to Him, as to whether we are saved; but His interests and His welfare are tied up with ours, as ours are with our children.

Another reason is, we need Him to help us to find and fill our place in His great plan. Our lives are neither games of chance nor freaks of fortune. We have a place in His great family, as also in His plan, and are members of a great working force. No man, therefore, can be his best and do his best and ignore God. God's help and blessing are as necessary to our welfare and salvation, as

parents are to the welfare of their children. He is our Savior, our companion, our best friend. He is laying himself out for us. We should own his claims, co-operate with his plans and respond to his overtures.

1

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE BIBLE?

Every scripture is inspired by God, and is useful for teaching, for convincing, for correction of error, and for instruction in right doing, so that the man of God may himself be complete and may be perfectly equipped for every good work.—2 Timothy, 3:16-17.

THIS passage of scripture has long been the subject of religious controversy. With all the influx of light which has come with enlightened, scholarly biblical criticism, its true exegesis is still an open question. Around its meaning theological war has long been waged, and over its true interpretation many a polemical battle has been fought. If we were to wade through all the rubbish which has been heaped upon it, in the effort to understand its meaning, we would find ourselves engaged in an endless task, but if we were to stand off from it, because its teaching has frequently been distorted and misconstrued, we would leave untouched one of the richest mines of biblical truth. The apostle Paul, that eminent champion of the Christian faith and brilliant expositor of Christianity, here pays a glowing tribute to the value of the scriptures. He assures us that their chief function is to make men wise unto salvation. Their supreme value lies in their instruction in righteousness, the aim of which instruction is to thoroughly equip the man of God for every good work. They are not only valuable on account of what they contain, but on account of the divine influence entering into their production. They are profitable because they were inspired by God, and in turn inspire human thought and life. Although the apostle here asserts the inspiration of the scriptures as a fact, he does not explicitly define the manner in which it took place, nor the length to which it extended.

Touching the manner and extent of inspiration, two theories have long been in the field, both of which have had able advocates. One is that the soul of the scriptures

is of God, but the body was constructed by man. It is maintained that God inspired the thought, but left men at liberty to express the thought as they understood it, and in words most intelligible to them and their contemporaries. When, therefore, errors are found, and inaccurate statements are encountered, they may be explained on the ground of elementary knowledge, or judged by the date when they were written. The other theory contends for verbal and plenary inspiration. Its advocates hold that the divine energy so completely absorbed and controlled the human composers as to insure absolute truth in the most unimportant details, thus rendering the slightest inaccuracy impossible. When, therefore, any errors are met, whether scientific, historic or moral, it is maintained that they either crept in through copyists, or else they are regarded as error because we do not understand them. This theory makes the Bible flawlessly perfect and absolutely inerrant. In this view it is of equal value and authority from Genesis to Revelation, and is not only inspired in every part, but in every word.

Whatever view, however, of inspiration we may take, it must be admitted that as an authority on religion, the Bible is the most valuable book in the world. It is valuable because it outlines the great principles of conduct and points out the path of right. It is valuable because it discloses to us the character of God, and holds before us the highest conceivable destiny. It is valuable because it corrects moral and religious error, and throws a flood of light upon the problems of life, which we can get from no other source. It is profitable because it instructs men in the great subjects of righteousness and incites them to the noblest achievement and most unselfish endeavor.

I remark first: The Bible did not fall out of heaven, but grew from heavenly seed, in human soil. It is not an exotic in human life, coming to us from some distant clime, but it came up from human life, through the inspiration of God, and therefore, contains elements, both human and divine. Unfortunately, there are those who have all but deified this book. Their reverence almost amounts to idolatry. They look upon it as a book fallen down from God. Its pages are to them as sacred as the truth it contains, and its very leaves are the gift of God. They imagine it was written by men as holy as angels, and by hands unstained by sin. To many it possesses a sort of

magic which would make one safer if placed under his pillow at night, and would keep spooks away if placed on the door step. They do not regard it as a gradual evolution, growing through the centuries, until it reached its present form, but look on it as an immediate creation. They forget it has a physical body, as well as a divine soul. They overlook its eventful, unique history, because absorbed by its gracious ministry. They handle it as if it were swung out from the battlements of heaven by a golden cord. They treat it as if it were guarded by angels as it lies on the center table. In their judgment man had little, or no part in its composition and preservation. They think it was produced by the hand of God, and has been preserved by a special providence. They ignore the human elements entering into its composition, except as they were absolutely absorbed and dominated by the divine. They are not satisfied with inspiration of its thought, but read divinity into its every word, its vowels, consonants, its minutest details. They make all its parts of equal value and authority, and look on it as a compendium of knowledge on all subjects.

We still cling to the worth of the Bible, but have moved away from this sort of worship. The attitude of our day may seem less reverent, but it is more intelligent. We know that the Bible did not fall out of heaven. We know that its pages are no more sacred than those of any other book. Its leaves are no more the gift of God than the leaves on the trees. We know that it was not written by men as holy as angels, nor by hands unstained by sin; but by men no better than many men today. We know that it does not possess any magic. One would be no more safe with the Bible under his pillow than with Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. It would not keep spooks away if placed on the door step any more than the old blue back speller. We know that the seed from which the Bible grew were heavenly, but the soil was human. The soul is of God, but the body was constructed by man. The truth inbreathed into the thought of man was divine, but the expression was given by and through man.

What is the Bible? It is a gradual and progressive revelation of God. It is a collection of the most spiritual utterances, of the most spiritual race of the past.* It

*"Signs of Promise," Chap. XVI.

consists of a number of books, written by a number of men, of various types and temperaments. They wrote at different times, with different objects in view, many times in total ignorance of what others had written, or would write, and with absolutely no intention of making such a book as the Bible. The Bible came up out of the experiences and struggles of eighteen centuries of human life. It gradually evolved through the action of the divine spirit on the religious consciousness of a susceptible people. It is the history of the soul's quest after God. It is God's effort to reveal himself to man and to educate the human soul. It is more a record of what God has done, than said. It contains the plot of a great play. God is standing behind the scenes, and men come on the stage to play their part, and so leave the account of their successes and failures for the information and inspiration of posterity. It is not so much a collection of authoritative statements as a history of the manifestation of God in human life. It is not something foreign to the human mind, nor an exotic in human experience. It is the divine life of God, revealed in human experience, and growing under the showers and sunshine of human struggle.

I remark second: The Bible is a book of religion and a manual of morals. It is not a compendium of all knowledge, nor an authority on all subjects. Too often its object has been misunderstood, and its standpoint absolutely ignored. Certainly no book has been so unjustly attacked. Missing its aim, men have blasphemously ridiculed it. Taking it out of its sphere, they have looked on it as a tissue of lies. There have been instances, however, where some came to mock, but discovering its high purpose and beneficent aim, remained to pray.

On the contrary, no book has been so foolishly defended. Thinking it an authority on all subjects, men have defended all its utterances on that ground. The Bible was never intended to be a handbook on history, or an authority on science. We do the book more harm than good in trying to defend some of its inaccurate historical and scientific statements. That there are errors of this kind, no man will deny. We can no longer rest the authority of this book on its dates and figures. Nor, was this book ever intended to be an authority on all subjects. Historic and scientific accuracy is not necessary to its moral veracity.

A writer might be in error about the movements of the

earth or the heavenly bodies, and still be truthful about religious experiences. David's astronomical error about the movements of the sun, in the nineteenth Psalm does not affect the value or the veracity of his moral teaching in the same Psalm. Such errors can be easily explained when once we recognize the object and character of this book. The authors of the Bible were not omniscient and inspiration did not make them infallible. The book itself shows a continual advance, both in knowledge and conduct. Many conceptions, customs, statements and dates must be judged by their date, and considered as defects of early experience and elementary training.

The book is vindicated by the soul which animates it, and the perfect goal toward which it is traveling, which is Christ. There are imperfect human elements in it, which no man can ignore. All parts cannot be of equal value and authority. The theory of verbal and plenary inspiration can neither justify nor explain errors in statements or defects in moral standards.

In my judgment the value of the book is not destroyed, but enhanced by admitting that it is partly human. The soul of the book is of God, but its body is of man. We are not surprised that the body should have weaknesses and infirmities such as are peculiar to humanity. We would be surprised if it did not have. Nobody doubts the existence and spirituality of the soul because the body may sometimes be frail or even diseased. The treasures of God's thought were given to us in earthen vessels, but the defects of the vessels do not destroy the reality or value of the treasure.

I remark third: The value of the Bible lies in its superb instruction in righteousness and in the influence it exerts on religious life and thought. It is the supreme text on righteousness. It stands absolutely alone in the grandeur of its theme and the uniqueness of its treatment. No book in all the world fixes our thought so steadily on the one supreme interest of character. This is the only book which keeps always before us the fundamental fact that the one great concern of every man should be to be right in heart and life. It is true, the principle of righteousness was not always fully understood nor rightly applied as the early records will show. The definition of righteousness in early times would not be our definition at all. In places in the old testament the conception of what

was right was very defective. The standard of morality of men like Jacob, David and Solomon was so low that had they lived today they would have either been sent to prison or lynched without trial. The most atrocious crimes of which we can conceive were claimed to have been committed in the name of the Lord. And the writers of some of the old testament books justify the slaughter of the Canaanites on this ground. The ethical standard of the imprecatory psalms is not that of the sermon on the mount. The prayer which David often prayed for the destruction of his enemies, was not the prayer which Christ taught His disciples to pray when He taught them to pray for their enemies.

But this book must be taken as a whole, and we must judge its elementary teaching by its maturest conceptions. Its highest moral and intellectual level must be found in Christ. What is not in harmony with His spirit is elementary and obsolete. What does not conform to his ethical standards has been abrogated. The botany of a flower may not be understood until it blooms; and the principle of righteousness was confused and misconstrued until it blossomed in Christ.

To any man who wants to know God and right, the Bible is the most valuable book in all the world. It deals with the highest and holiest themes of life. It lifts before the thought the noblest conceptions of God and the highest ideals of human conduct. It points out the bitterness and folly of sin and shows man the joy and value of right living. It traces the path that "slopes through darkness up to God," and beckons man up and on and out to the noblest conceivable destiny. It unveils the face of God as no other book, and invites man to fellowship with his father. It shows the awful darkness and fierce struggles through which men have traveled in their quest after God. It sets the face of the race toward the morning and rings with a triumphant note of wholesome, helpful optimism. It is always traveling toward Christ, its theme and interpreter. He is its soul and its goal. His teaching is its maturest conceptions. His life is its noblest achievement. His redemption is its glorious consummation.

No book has shaped life and thought as has the Bible. Literature and history and religion are shot through with its influences. Poets, philosophers, scholars and orators have been fired and armed by its precepts and promises.

Art and architecture bear its imprint, and its principles are seen in modern government and jurisprudence. It has always been a source and fountain of noble achievement. It gave Milton his theme for *Paradise Lost*, it gave Handel his inspiration for his *Messiah*; it gave Titian his scene for his *Transfiguration*. It fired the heart of Cromwell in his conflict for liberty. It stirred the soul of Luther in his contest for the reformation, and the era of the reformation, broke forth upon darkened Europe.

It inspired the souls and ballasted the faith of our fathers in founding a republic upon American soil. It still stirs the sweetest memories of childhood; it sanctifies the associations of home; it sweetens the relationships of life and points the path to heaven. This is the book, the message of which has gone ringing around the world. This is the book, the light of which is breaking everywhere.

"This precious book I'd rather own
Than all the golden gems
That e'er in monarchs' coffers shone,
Or on their diadems.
And were the seas one chrysolite,
This earth a golden ball,
And gems were all the stars of night,
This book were worth them all.
Ah, no, the soul ne'er found relief
In glittering hoards of wealth;
Gems dazzle not the eye of grief;
Gold can not purchase health.
But here a blessed balm appears
For every human woe,
And they that seek that book in tears,
Their tears shall cease to flow."

DOES THE GRAVE END ALL?

If a man die, shall he live again?—Job 14:14.

THE question raised in this passage of scripture is one of the profoundest inquiries that has ever engaged the thought of man. The question is as old as the race, and men have been asking it and seeking for its answer from time almost immemorial. Notwithstanding its antiquity, its answer was never sought with more interest and enthusiasm than by thinking men of the present day. It was doubtless one of the first questions that trembled upon the lips of man, when in the early morning of the world's history, men first began to philosophize about life. And it is the last inquiry which lingers in a man's thought when passing from this scene of action into the great unknown. From the time the race first began to speculate upon the problems of life, it has been a question of deepest concern; and it comes to us today with as much freshness and as profound an interest as when it was first asked. Not until death with all its bitterness and destructiveness is abolished; not until the grave with all its coldness and sadness becomes unnecessary; not until human homes cease to be broken up and human hearts cease to bleed; not until we cease to lay our loved ones away in the cold ground, will men cease to ask this question. Our interest will always be intense, as long as the race moves toward that bourn from whence no traveler ever returns.

To most of us life appears little more than an insoluble mystery, and ostensibly the future stretches away into impenetrable darkness. Standing after this present existence is an interrogation point, and the knowledge most in request is that touching our future destiny. Does the grave end all? Is this life to find its supplement and complement in another? When we lay our loved ones away is this their final end, or does the soul survive the dissolution of the body? Does growth cease when it has scarcely

begun, or is there another realm somewhere, where it will continue? When life flees from our bodies is the soul blown out as by a puff of wind, or does it pass to another clime, where it shall be reincarnated under more favorable circumstances? Does man fade as the leaf and pass back into the great sum of things, as rain drops melt back into the ocean?

These are questions which engage the thought of every intelligent man. And our belief in a future life largely determines the use we make of the present. The aim of this discourse is not to answer these questions with any demonstrative proof. Such proof cannot be had. The most we can do in a single hour is to cite a few reasons and tabulate a few evidences, which, in our judgment afford a rational basis for a hope of immortality.

I remark first: The nobility of man's endowments, indicates his high destiny. This is the being of upturned face, and gripping at his heart are aspirations which predict a future. Somewhere his spirit was finely touched to fine issues, and it is but reasonable to suppose that there will be scope and sweep, somewhere, for his full development. His powers of reflection raise him above the sphere of mere sensation. He is an animal, but he is more. Of all beings in the universe he stands closest to God, and is most like Him. Through reason he elaborates from the facts of sensation, vast systems of thought. Modern science, with all its marvelous achievements, is at once the instrument and the result of his reflection. Looking toward the heavens he discovers the relative positions of moving worlds, and noting their order and relationships, he builds the great science of astronomy. Discovering the great law of chemical affinity, and watching the results of the combination of chemical elements, he builds the great science of chemistry. Walking among the rocks and reading the meaning of the strata of the earth, he builds the science of geology. By inventive ingenuity he pries into the secrets of the electric current, and providing pathways along which it may travel, he illuminates buildings and communicates his thoughts. Through language, he overcomes time, and bursts the barriers of personal isolation. He hands forward his thought to succeeding generations, and thus blesses posterity with his monumental genius. In poetry and the fine arts he rises to the loftiest conceptions of ideal excellence.

Through trope, simile and rythm he inspires the souls of his fellows. Stamping his thought on the fleeting tones of his voice, he makes halls and cathedrals resound with his eloquence. But the crowning glory of man is the sense of responsibility he carries. He admires virtue and perceives moral obligation. He is aware that he is the architect of his own fortune. He is conscious that there is a power above him that calls him up and out to the highest conceivable destiny. The faculty which discerns the beauty of right choice is conscience. This is an ever present force in human nature. Man alone, of all God's creatures can distinguish the moral qualities of action, and his conduct is ever influenced by the tremendous power of moral obligation. His endowments indicate a nature fettered by present conditions. Manifestly, his supplies are incommensurable with his demands. He is dissatisfied with his present environment and unsatisfied by it. He is like an oak tree planted in a flower pot.

If there is no future life man is in prison, with little opportunity for expansion or development. With only the present brief span before him, there is a colossal contradiction between his powers and opportunities. With the longest life, man has scarcely begun to grow before his life is suddenly snuffed out. There must be higher designs than those unfolded here, else life is an insoluble mystery, and death an intolerable tragedy.

I remark second: There are certain fore-gleams of immortality, both structural and constitutional, which prophesy a future. One such foregleam is self-identity.* Our personality is the same it was twenty years ago, notwithstanding the mutations of matter. The physical body undergoes change, but through all its changes, our personality maintains its identity. Physiologists tell us our bodies undergo a complete change within a brief time, but not so our selfhood. The brain,—such is the strain of thought upon nerve tissue,—undergoes two complete changes within a year, but not so the mind. If therefore, the soul survives the changes of the body here, why not hereafter? It is not matter, but it distinguishes itself from matter. May it not, therefore, be all together independent of matter?

Another fore-gleam is seen in the aspirations and in-

*"Immortality,"—(Hills), p. 14.

instincts of the soul, which are prophetic. The instincts of animals, as also man, are deeply significant. Scientists are studying them now, as never before. The bee, the beast and the bird trust them and are not deceived. The lark lifts itself into the air, being spurred to flight by an inward instinct, only to find a medium which bears it up, and which answers to the demand of the instinct within. The robbin goes in search of the tropics, and instead of being mocked in its obedience to its instincts, is blessed by finding a response in the far away Southern clime. Following their instincts, the fish of the Southern seas travel toward the North, to spawn, and are rewarded by the cooler waters of the Northern seas, which answer to their native demands.

It is not reasonable to suppose that nature would speak truth to animals and lies to man. Everywhere men long for another life. Death is a horrifying and a dreadful thought. The desire for immortality is as universal as is hunger. No race of man has ever been found which did not desire and long for another life. Certainly our native aspirations do not mock us. A noble discontent inspires effort. All growth comes through a hidden stimulus toward the higher. It is the belief that this life stretches out and away into another and a larger life that nerves us for effort, and sustains us in the hour of trial.

Another fore-gleam of immortality is the beginnings of resurrection, which we see in the present life. We need only to open our eyes if we would see man emerging from the tomb. At best, in this world, he is but mind entombed in flesh. He is but reason bound in the grave clothes of matter. The escape of the soul from animalism is partial resurrection. The emancipation of manhood from hindrances and limitations is a bursting asunder of the bonds of death. Everywhere the lower man is gripping at the throat of the higher. When we would do good, and be our real selves, evil and the lower self stands in our path. Real selfhood is resurrected, as coarseness is refined out. What is germinal in man, bursts into full blossom in Christ. He is the great universal man, toward whose full-orbed manhood the race is traveling. By as much as we become like him, we are being redeemed and resurrected to our largest selfhood.

I remark last: Without immortality life is a colossal enigma. Without a future life, this is either a chance

world, or God is a monster. If the grave ends all, the universe is a huge machine, not for making, but crushing us. If we front darkness, suicide were a greater boon than life. The withheld completions of life would make life a curse. Early untimely deaths would be a riddle. The wrecks and failures of life strewn along the shores of time, would make living sickening. Somewhere growth begun here must be continued. It cannot be that the life of man is snuffed out like a candle. It cannot be that we flash across the firmament of existence like a meteor, only to go out in darkness. It cannot be that we melt back into nothingness as the rain drop melts into the bosom of the ocean. It cannot be that the soul is blown out, as by a puff of wind. It cannot be that the grave ends all. Death is not a tragedy, but a transition. "The voiceless lips of the unreplying dead" are not altogether sealed. Amid the blackness of awful darkness through which we grope, "hope sees a star;" and amid the roar and din of voices which beat on our ears, "listening love hears the rustle of a wing." A message of hope from an empty tomb rings around the world. Christ has brought life and immortality to light. He lives, and we may live also. There must be some far off realm toward which we are moving,

"Else whence this pleasing hope,
 This fond desire, this longing after immortality,
 This secret dread and inward horror
 Of falling into nought?
 Why shrinks the soul back on herself
 And startles at destruction?
 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us
 'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter
 And intimates eternity to man.
 The soul secure in her existence,
 Smiles at the drawn dagger and defies its point;
 The stars shall fade away,
 The sun himself grow dim with age
 And nature sink in years;
 But Thou shalt flourish unhurt
 Amid the war of elements, the wreck of matter
 And the crush of worlds."

When the young king of Argos was about to give up his young life by order of the gods, his young wife, bending over him asked him to tell her if they should meet again. He said, "I have asked that dreadful question of the hills that look eternal; of the flowing streams that lucid flow forever, of the stars, amid whose azure fields my raised

spirit hath trod in glory and all were dumb. But now,
as I look into thy beautiful face and see the love and
divinity and immortality that kindle through its beauty,
I am convinced that it can never perish. We shall meet
again."

"Tell me, ye winged winds, that round my pathway roar,
Do ye not know some spot where mortals weep no more.
Some lone and pleasant dell, some valley in the west,
Where, free from toil and pain, the weary soul may rest?
The loud wind dwindled to a whisper low
And sighed for pity as it answered, 'No.'

Tell me thou mighty deep, whose billows round me play,
Knowst thou some favored spot, some island far away
Where weary man may find the bliss for which he sighs,
Where sorrow never lives and friendship never dies?
The loud waves, rolling in perpetual flow,
Stopped for awhile and sighed to answer 'No.'

And thou, serenest moon, that, with such lovely face,
Dost look upon the earth, asleep in night's embrace.
Tell me, in all thy round hast thou not seen some spot
Where miserable man might find a happier lot?
Behind a cloud the moon withdrew in woe
And a voice, sweet, but sad, responded, 'No.'

Tell me, my secret soul—oh, tell me, Hope and Faith,
Is there no happy spot where mortals may be blessed.
Where grief may find a balm and weariness a rest?
Faith, Hope and Love, best boons to mortals given
Waved their bright wings and whispered, 'Yes; in heaven'."

IS PRAYER REASONABLE?

If you, then, being imperfect, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.—Matt. 7:11.

PRAYER is the very heart of all religion. It is the one fundamental doctrine which is common to all cults and creeds, and the one universal religious exercise in which all men, everywhere, engage, whether in Christian or heathen lands. The spirit which pervades it is the very soul of spirituality, and the motive which prompts it is the moving power which energizes the machinery of religious living. Tell me what a man's prayers are like, and I will tell you what is the character of his religion. Tell me how firm a man's faith in prayer is and I will tell you how firm is his grip upon christianity.

The question proposed for our study at this hour is not, do men believe in prayer. Were this our theme, the answer would not be far to seek; and in most cases it would be in the affirmative. The belief in prayer is almost universal, and its practice is conterminous with the human race. But the question is: Is prayer reasonable? It is difficult because it is philosophical, and it cannot be answered by gratuitous assumptions or assertions. Does God answer prayer, or is it a mere form of religious devotion which is based on a delusion? When we pray, do we speak into an empty void, from whence no response can come or is our prayer heard, and if heard, is it answered? Is it but an echo of our native instincts and a reaction in our religious emotions or is it an actual means of reaching ends and meeting human needs? These are questions which are asked by thinking men of every shade of religious opinion, and they cannot be ignored by anyone who will reflect intelligently upon the subject of prayer.

Touching the reasonableness of prayer, Christ is our greatest authority. No where in his teaching do we find a ring of doubt, or any note of uncertainty about the reality

of this part of our religious curriculum. That He believed in prayer is evident from the fact that He not only commanded others to pray, but also prayed Himself, and thus attested its reasonableness both by precept and example. He said, men must ask if they would receive, seek if they would find, and knock if they would obtain the blessings which they need. He assured men that asking and seeking and knocking are but three aspects of one and the same process; and therefore, no man truly prays who does not follow out these directions. He expounds the doctrine of prayer by an argumentum ad hominem.

We answer the prayer of our children by granting such blessings as are consistent with the interest of the family, and which are most suitable to their needs. If a son asks for bread, we do not offer him a stone; or a fish, we do not give him a serpent, but answer him according to the intelligence of his request and the character of his need. If we then,—argues Christ,—imperfect as we are, know how to give good gifts to our children, and are willing to grant reasonable requests, likewise our father in heaven can and will give good things to those who ask him. If prayer is natural in our children, and its answer reasonable in us, it is equally natural to the children of God, and is not less reasonable that our heavenly Father should answer those who pray.

I remark first: Prayer is more a process than a petition. The ways in which it brings results and the means by which it reaches ends are as natural as they are reasonable. It is most certainly something more than simply requesting things and getting them by request. The common view of prayer, however, is that it consists, chiefly, of petition. It is regarded by some as little more than a short cut to results. It is a sort of easy way to obtain gratuities without effort or outlay. It is looked on as a refined way of saving labor, and saving it by drawing on one's patrimony, instead of investing one's energies. It is a feeding on the bounty of our benefactor because it is easier to draw on our resources than to become producers ourselves. It is asking God to circumvent natural processes and contravene natural laws, to save us from outlay of mentality and muscle.

Heaven, in the judgment of some, is looked on as little more than a great dispensary. All needed blessings, in some mysterious way have been stored up and are ready

for distribution, upon request. God is a great benefactor and distributor, standing back in a great commissary department, with little more to do than pass out supplies. Men are all pensioners and beggars, devoting most of their time to asking for gifts, and not only asking for them, but receiving them directly and gratuitously. God's will is looked upon as something other and different from his laws. It is supposed he will empty heaven, if we ask him, and will upset the universal order to satisfy one or more individuals. There are some people who go so far as to believe almost any kind of results may be obtained through prayer. The natural order may be set aside for a whim, and the general interest of the universe ignored on demand. They suppose disease may be cured without treatment; a storm calmed by request; rain brought at the behest of only a few, and the weather changed to suit a single locality. Provisions may be had without work or worry. All one needs to do is to pray earnestly enough and material supplies will be handed out to meet any physical needs. If the exchequer be depleted, and the pantry be exhausted, all one needs to do is to offer up petition and a check will be forthcoming, and a barrel of flour will come rolling in the back door.

Passing from the realm of the physical into that of the moral and intellectual, they think character may be had for asking, and knowledge may be obtained without study.

This view of prayer is passing, and passing because it is unreasonable. It has vanished before the advance of intelligence and been relegated to the limbo of the obsolete by the diffusion of knowledge. Let no one conclude, however, that we have lost faith in prayer. We have only changed our view of its nature. Do not think we have stopped praying, but we have stopped expecting everything and anything, simply for asking. If prayer seems less omnipotent, it is certainly not less effectual because more intelligent. The modern mind no longer looks on it simply as a device for getting things quickly and easily.

If it be asked then, what is prayer, in the modern view, the answer is at hand. Prayer is more a process than a petition. It is more an act than an attitude. It is more knocking and seeking for things than asking for them. As a matter of fact, asking is but an incident in prayer. It is but the entrance upon a line of action, of which knocking and seeking form the chief part. It is but the

expression of the desire of the heart, and the readiness of the hands to co-operate with God in the manipulation of natural processes, the manipulation of which brings legitimate results. It is more than a mode of requesting things to be given outright. God and man are parties to a common process, which when rightfully manipulated, facilitates their mutual interests. God bestows blessings through law, not contrary to it. Man obtains blessings by going through natural processes, not by setting them aside. Prayer does not upset the order of the world, but facilitates it. It is not a supersession, nor a suspension of laws. To suppose it would remove a mountain, stop an earthquake, affect the weather or turn disease suddenly into health, is unreasonable. It does not set aside law, but reaches its ends through law. It does not ignore the ordinary processes of life, but works them and works through them. Prayer is not a draft on blessings made to hand. We pray for God's kingdom to come, but we do not expect it, simply in answer to a petition. It comes not as a result of asking, like snow falling from heaven, but under God, is produced through ordinary processes of life, by tireless working and Godly living.

Prayer is more a life than a litany. The man who plants seed, by that very act, is asking God, through the laws of nature, to give him a harvest. The man who enters school, by that very act asks God, through the laws of the mind, to give him knowledge. The man who enters business, by that very act, asks God through the laws of commerce, to give him profit. The man who starts a new life, by that very act asks God through the laws of right, to give him the results of right living.

I remark second: Christ explained the reasonableness of prayer on natural grounds, and illustrated and illumined his great idea by a most beautiful and familiar analogy. He said, God treats us much like we treat our children. Prayer is not an unnatural nor an unreasonable thing in the home, but is just what we might expect, and just what we actually find. Our children pray to us, and we answer their prayers. It is natural they should ask and reasonable that they should be answered. They do not always get what they ask for, but usually get what they need. Parents are imperfect and do not always answer wisely. Children are selfish and ignorant, and do not always ask for right things. If all their whims were answered it would upset

the family and send pandemonium into the home. On the contrary, if all their requests were ignored, they would suffer intolerably. Their requests must be reasonable, and the answer of parents must be so wise as not to put a premium on self indulgence and indolence. The ability of a father and the need of a child are correlative. It is reasonable to suppose that a father will answer the prayers of his child because he should and can. He does not leave him to the mercy of nature, but enables him to make nature serve him. He does not expect all needed blessings to come as a matter of course, but answers his requests by helping him to seek what he needs.

If now, an earthly father cares for his family in this manner, our heavenly Father cares more. This is not an orphan world, nor is God an absentee God. He has not left us to work out our destiny, without His supervision. He is not unconcerned about our welfare, and His ear is not deaf to our cry. Nor, are His hands tied by natural laws so He cannot bless, but laws are His will and His servants in blessing His children. It is reasonable to suppose that God has more autonomy in His world than we have in our homes. We answer the prayers of our children in ways that do no violence to our homes. He can, and does answer our prayers in ways that do no violence to His world. If we are not figure-heads and machines in our homes, certainly God is not in His world.

Light is thrown on this problem also, when we remember that only good gifts come from God in answer to prayer. They are not only good for us, but good for all, because good for us; and good for us, because good for all. God cannot consider our whims any more than we consider the whims of our children. Being a heavenly father, he gives only gifts which most befit heaven, and which most fit us for heaven.

I remark last: Prayer is reasonable because it is universal. The instinct prompting it is as native as it is universal. Whatever their race or clime, men, everywhere, are suppliants. From infancy to old age, men pray and aspire to fellowship and communion with the infinite. The savage and sage, alike, look up and invoke help in time of need. Peasant and king, respond to the same native call to prayer, and bow before the majesty of the same imperative need. The untutored tiller in the field and the philosopher among his books, awake, alike, to feelings

of dependence, and alike, secretly ask for needed benediction. Everywhere men feel that they are beneficiaries, that somewhere there must be a great common father who shapes human ends, and hears human cries. Instinctively we feel for a hand unseen, and listen for a voice that should be heard. From the "tongueless silence of the dreamless dust" there comes no word, but in the great world about us there must be some big heart that beats in sympathy for us. From the unreplying lips of invisible love some response must come. Prayer is the one touch of nature that makes the whole race kin. Men bow in reverence, or kneel in humility at a common shrine and plead for common blessings. Race distinctions and differences of creed vanish before the common cries of burdened souls. Whether on christian or heathen ground, men feel after God, if haply they may find Him.

Prayer is offered wherever a sincere soul seeks after God, and it is answered whenever it finds Him. For the strongest man an hour comes when the world reels beneath his feet, and he wants a divine bosom on which to lean. There are hours when all other helpers fail, and when we reach out for the everlasting arms which are always open to all.

Christ sounded the universal note when he taught men to say, "Our Father." This is the universal prayer. When the great congress of religions assembled at Chicago, during the World's Fair, there came to that great convention, representatives of all religions, from every quarter of the earth. In that company were Buddhist priests from India, Brahmins from Ceylon, priests from Japan, teachers of Confucius from China, representatives of the Greek churches from Athens, scholars from upper Egypt and lower Arabia. They represented every shade of religious opinion, and came from every clime. When Dr. Barrows, the promoter of that great movement, rose to open the assembly, he looked out over that vast audience and said, "How shall this parliament be opened?" A Brahmin in the rear of the auditorium answered, "Open it with the Lord's prayer, for I have long been convinced that this is the universal prayer of humanity." And then that vast throng sent up one united voice to the one great, common Father, in the words of the one universal prayer, as they said, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in

heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen." And the great Max Muller, the greatest philologist the world has even known said this was the greatest achievement of christianity in the annals of its history, when the universal world, in the person of the representatives of the world's religions stood with bowed heads and united in the Lord's prayer.

WHO WAS CHRIST?

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, who is this?—Matt. 21:10.

THAT was a memorable day in the life of Christ when, amid the shouts and hosannas of an immense throng, He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and by a vast multitude was proclaimed king. It was the first day of that eventful week in which He was crucified, and soon He was to hang on the cross, just outside the gates of the city, over which He had wept so bitterly, and which He had tried so hard to save. Now that He is nearing the close of his earthly career, He would give His own people a final opportunity to acknowledge Him king. Should they decline to own Him, their house would be left to them desolate. Accordingly, He comes riding into the city, attended by an immense throng. Their enthusiasm rose to such a height that some wrenched palm branches from the trees and scattered them along his path, while others threw their garments in His way, as a recognition of His rule and royalty. His entrance into the city created a sensation. Such was the consternation of the inhabitants, and such the curiosity which the event aroused that the people came rushing out to see what this procession meant. The whole city was moved, and very naturally, they asked, who is this?

The question of his contemporaries is still the question of the twentieth century. Christ has always been an interrogation point in history. The mystery of his incarnation has never yet been fully solved, and the tremendous influence of his unique career has never been fully understood. Wherever He appeared among men, when on earth, His presence created a sensation; and even in our day, the mention of His name still starts thoughts and stimulates inquiry.

Who is this colossal figure who has come riding down

the centuries with such gigantic stride? Who is this man who has come riding into every department of human thought and life, the grandeur of whose morality has never been equaled, before the majesty of whose intellectual greatness the world still bows? Who is this man of Galilee, who holds such sway over the enlightened nations of the earth, and whose system of teaching is most at home in a scientific age? Who was this Christ, whose religion is destined to be the religion of the future, and whose reign is destined to girdle the world? Who was this historic anomaly, this universal man, this citizen of the world who was the embodiment of ideal excellence, and the impersonation of all that is noblest and best in humanity? Was he the son of God, or was he not? Was he a mere man, or the incarnation of deity? Was he no more than any other of the great moralists of the past, such as Socrates, Plato, Zeno or Seneca, or were his claims divine? These are questions which have agitated the thought of thinking men for almost two thousand years; and each age must settle them for itself.

We may ignore Christ, but this does not dispense with Him. We may deny His divinity and authority, but this does not explain away the wonderful phenomena of christianity. We may treat Him as an impostor or a fanatic, or a mere man; but this does not account for his unique career, or the wonderful grip which he has upon the world.

I remark first: He is regarded by some as either an impostor, or a self-deluded enthusiast. They maintain that He either intended to deceive, or was Himself deceived. He either mesmerized His own contemporaries, or is still holding the thought of the world under the magic spell of a hallucination.

That He was an intentional deceiver is, in my judgment, as absurd as it is unreasonable. Nothing was more inconsistent with his character than deception. He was a mirror of candor and sincerity. Hypocrisy was as foreign to him as it was detestable. His life was an open book; and his motives were as transparent as they were pure. His work was done in the open. He concealed nothing from the glare of the public eye. On the contrary, He invited investigation, and challenged any one to convict Him of sin or duplicity. He pursued quite a different course to that of an impostor. Had He been a deceiver, He would not have pro-

voked unnecessary hostility, since any opposition would have brought investigation. Instead of provoking hostility, He would have curried favor, and pandered to the popular conventionalities of His time. Had He been a time server, He would have yielded to popular clamor when the people desired to make him king by force. If he intended to deceive, He was unquestionably the most impolitic and undiplomatic man in history. He was most uncompromising in his terms of discipleship, swerving never an inch from right, in order to win favor. He deceived no man into his service by false pretenses or visions of unbroken ease. So far from currying favor with men, He ignored their time honored traditions and shattered their popular superstitions in a manner as bold as it was merciless.

Nor, is it reasonable to suppose that he was a deluded enthusiast. Fanaticism cannot account for the phenomena of christianity. Everywhere, causes must be adequate to effects. If Christ was a fanatic, His achievements are the most colossal miracle in history. No fanatic could hold the attention and the love of the world as has Christ. There is no reason to believe that He was in any sense abnormal. His thinking was balanced and most profound, showing the healthiness and vigor of his great mind. His conduct was practical and eminently sane, showing His sensible grip upon principles, and the normal way in which He lived them. True, He was dubbed "fanatic" by some of His contemporaries, but this has been the unhappy lot of all great men. They stood so close to Him that they could not see the proportions of His genius and His greatness; and it was because they misunderstood Him that they stigmatized Him.

Sanity must be tested by the soundness of one's reasoning, and the level of one's living. No fanatic could have produced the Sermon on the Mount. The level of His living has never been reached. The world is cleaving to His genius and imitating His example today, as never before.

I remark second: There are others who look on Him only as a great and good man. They admit He was the flower of humanity, but they deny his deity. Those who advocate this view are as far from believing He was an impostor or a fanatic as those who believe in His deity. They ascribe to Him the strictest honesty and accredit Him with the purest motives. They resent any impeach-

ment of His sanity, or reflection on His sincerity. They look on Him as a model man, and the master of men. They admit the greatness of his intellect and the grandeur of His morality. They hold that He was divine, but divine only as all men are divine. He was divine as all men are in kind, but more divine than any man, in degree. He stood closer to God than all other men, but at best was only a man. They do not deny His divinity, but His deity. In their judgment, He was like God, but was not God; He was a being apart from God, and not one in substance with God; He lived a human life and died a human death; He was one of the greatest of men, but only a man.

It needs but little insight to see that there is a modicum of truth in this view, but many overlook the fact that it is only a half truth.

It is true that Christ was a man, and the flower of humanity. Too often His humanity is minimized and explained away in the effort to save His deity, as if emphasis on the one could destroy the reality of the other. Deity need not be lost because the humanity of Christ is made intensely human. As a matter of fact, without his humanity, he would cease to be Christ. Without humanity, He might be God in the abstract, but could not be God in the concrete; and it is just his humanity which makes the Christ idea both tangible and possible.

Christ was not without His limitations. In the person of Christ, God put just as much of Himself into human form as was possible. And by this very act, chose to limit Himself by subjecting Himself to the conditions of human life. There was, therefore, a normal development in the life of Christ, much as there is in the life of man. The scriptures teach that His human limitations affected Him, much as they affect us; and there is certainly deep significance in the fact that he increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man. He was the one universal man. He transcended the narrow limits of individuality and nationality. He is the one generic man in whom men of all nationalities may find the great brotherman. He was the contemporary of men of all times and colors and climes. He was the one citizen of the world, the most exemplary cosmopolitan man the world has ever seen. He showed the possibilities of human nature in fruition, and carried humanity up to its highest perfection. He possessed the qualities of mind and heart, without which

manhood is impossible. He was the embodiment of ideal excellence, and the impersonation of all that is best and noblest in humanity.

"If Jesus Christ is a man,—
And only a man,—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to Him will I cleave alway.
If Jesus Christ is a God,—
And the only God,—I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air."

But the humanitarian view does not explain all the facts.

I remark third: There are others who hold that he was a man, but He was more. He was the incarnation of deity; God living a human life, in the form of a man. Only on this hypothesis can we explain his intellectual supremacy. It is still true today, as in His day, that no man ever spoke like this man. He stands alone in the sublimity and elevation of His thought. He is unequalled in the depth of His philosophic insight, and His grasp of moral principles. His discourses are classics, and His parables masterpieces. His intellectual pre-eminence cannot be accounted for by anything in His age or education. So far from being the product of His age, He ran counter to the influences and traditions of His time, and was an anomaly to His contemporaries. Nothing can be evolved unless first involved. No effect could be more inconsistent with a cause than was Christ with the influences of His age. Nor, was He made by the schools of His day, for he exploded their dogmas and punctured their delusions with an iconoclasm, which was as pitiless as it was ruthless. His career is incommensurate with His humble origin and training. We have seen genius emerge from obscurity, but never genius like this. If He was only a man, His intellectual achievements amount to a miracle.

Likewise, His moral pre-eminence also attests His deity. He is the one spotless sinless man in history. His own age recognized the purity of His life and the sincerity of His purpose. The man who betrayed Him, called him innocent; and the one who delivered Him to be crucified called Him faultless. He was crucified not for His sins, but because He was misunderstood. He was the victim of circumstances, and a martyr to His convic-

tions. Microscopic criticism has been turned on Him as on no other. Many, however, who have come to mock, have remained to pray. His great personality grows more fascinating, the closer we get to Him; His gigantic manhood grows more massive and his colossal character more beautiful with the march of the centuries. A source cannot be foul where the flowing stream is clear. Wherever Christ has touched humanity, sin has faded into purity. Vice cannot heal viciousness, nor sin sinning. The influence of Christ attests his purity; and His immaculate life His deity.

I remark fourth: If it be asked now who is Christ? I answer, He is God in the form of man. He is deity dwelling in humanity and struggling to purify and glorify human life and living. This is God, come as near man as He can, that He may draw men near to Him. This is God, coming out of the abstract into the concrete. This is God, incarnating himself that He may be seen and known. This is God, expressing himself in terms of human life and human experience. This is God, come near enough, and in a form that men may see His face and feel His heart beat. How this interprets human nature and reveals to us the native wants of humanity. The human heart, everywhere, yearns for a tangible God. A mere metaphysical abstraction is too cold and vague and soulless.

" 'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for, my flesh that
I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ
stand!"

Out of Christ God is incomprehensible, in Christ He is tangible and knowable. The incarnation, therefore, was not an expedient, but a fundamental necessity. In my judgment Christ would have come if man had never sinned. Sin is but an incident, and salvation from it is but a part of the work of Christ. If it had not been necessary for Him to come to save us from sin, he would have come to reveal God to us, and to save us to the highest possibilities of our nature. He is, therefore, more than a redeemer; he is a revealer; and a redeemer because he is a revealer. He is the spiritual leader of the race, and his is the religion of the future. Men, everywhere, have seen His star in the

East, and are coming to worship Him. The wisdom, the wealth and the worship of the world are being laid at His feet. His influence is being felt in every department of thought and life. He has touched the pencil of the painter, and under His magic spell the greatest masterpieces of art have been produced. He has touched the pen of the author and the most voluminous literature is eminently christian, and most of the books in our libraries are pervaded with christian thought and shot through with christian sentiment. He has touched the soul of the philanthropist and the waste places of the earth have been made to blossom as the rose; and animated by his spirit men have gone anywhere and everywhere to redeem the lowly. He has touched the wealth of the wealthy and the pockets of millionaires are being emptied today into the channels of helpfulness and blessing, as never before. The nations of the world are calling for His gospel, and the most benighted regions are waking to His loving call. Paganism is vanishing before his conquering tread; and the banner of His cross is being unfurled in every valley and on every hilltop. We are rapidly hastening toward that glad day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of the Father.

The great Napoleon, in summing up the influences which have most affected men and which have produced civilization, paid a high tribute to the greatness, and the marvelous achievements of Christ. He said: Caesar, Charlemagne, Alexander and myself have founded kingdoms, but upon what did we found the creations of our genius? We founded them upon force. Jesus Christ also founded a kingdom, but he founded it upon love; and while the creations of our genius are crumbling to the dust, our names passing into oblivion, and the relics of our achievements being relegated to the limbo of the forgotten, Jesus Christ is still loved with an undying devotion, and there are millions today throughout the world who would die for Him.

"Ah no, thou life of the heart,
Never shalt thou depart!
Not till the heaven of God
Shall lighten each human clod;
Not till the world shall climb
To thy height serene, sublime,
Shall the Christ who enters our door
Pass to return no more."

HOW ARE WE SAVED?

Then said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own life; or, what shall a man give in exchange for his life?—Matt. 16:24-26.

THE most valuable thing in all the world is life. Without it man is a pauper and all the world beside is worthless. With it, he is owner of the most priceless treasure that a mortal can possess, notwithstanding he may be destitute of all else in the world. Whoever gains the whole world and loses his life sustains infinite loss, and whoever gives his life in exchange for the world, or anything in the world, not only bankrupts his own soul, but squanders the most valuable possession ever intrusted to the keeping of man. Life is that for which the race has always been in quest, and that to which man clings longest and most tenaciously. How to preserve life and protect it from the imminent dangers to which it is exposed, is a matter of supreme moment to every man; and how to develop and expand the possibilities which tremble in every man's breast, is the profoundest problem in moral science. Destruction is a process which is going on in every realm of nature. The ravages of disease are seen on every hand. The life of the body not infrequently hangs on a slender thread. Mental chaos is as frequent as it is deplorable. The atrophy and dissolution of the soul is not more uncommon than the dissolution of the body. To save one's life and preserve one's powers from decay and destruction is paramount to all else.

Every great teacher has had his secret of a happy life. Every great moralist has made his contribution to the solution of the problem of living. He has defined what he conceived to be the summum bonum of life, and pointed out what he regarded as the path that leads to the stars. Not

otherwise was it with Christ, when He inaugurated His great scheme of redemption. He, too, announced a program of living, and mapped out a plan of salvation. His regime is as beautiful as it is original, and His principle, in accordance with which men must live that they may obtain life, is as natural as it is fundamental. His appeal is to man's will, in which appeal he recognizes human autonomy and responsibility. He asks men in all conditions of life, to find themselves, and putting themselves under His tuition, to make the most of themselves. That they may do this, they must renounce self. If they would find real life, they must crucify the lower self on the cross of self denial. Each man must pass through the divine curriculum, and if he would find life, he must reach it through the gateway of death.

The supreme end and aim of human existence, therefore, is finding and developing and conserving one's higher self. The process through which we reach this end is self denial. The power which pulls us up and out is Christ, and He can pull us up and out only when we commit ourselves to divine discipline and the realization of divine ideals. All else dwindles into insignificance in comparison with the salvation of one's selfhood. There is no loss comparable to the loss of real life. The price of all real life is suffering and sacrifice.

I remark first: The call of Christ to a higher life and right living presupposes man's ability to respond. Christ most emphatically recognized human autonomy. He lodged the responsibility for determining the issues of life in man's will. The human will is the arbiter of human action and the self determining power in all human conduct. According to the teachings of Christ man is neither a machine nor a corpse. He is neither deaf to the appeals of the gospel nor dead to divine impressions. Whatever may be the extent of his moral inability, he is most certainly not impervious to moral ideas nor insensible to holy incentives. Whatever may have been the effects of sin upon his moral constitution, he still has the power to choose and the ability to act. He may be dead,—and certain it is that sin has wrought havoc in his being,—yet it cannot be that he is totally devoid of all power to move.

If he is powerless this challenge is mockery. If he is dead, it is either nonsense or ignorance. Either Christ did not know man, or in this summons He was desecrating

the dead. If the will of man has been shattered and he cannot move, this invitation has absolutely no meaning. The doctrine of moral inability, though firmly entrenched in theological systems, did not originate with Christ. He never taught it; nor, did He act as if He believed it. Certainly He knew men are weak, selfish and sinful; and no man ever deplored sin more than He. Yet with all the chaos it had wrought in human life, He taught that even the lowest and vilest could turn from it if they would. The most incapable and undeveloped were not totally devoid of desire and will.

Nor, is man totally depraved or devoid of all goodness. He did not look on humanity as a mass of corruption. In His judgment men were not all criminals. Their faculties were not simply so many inlets and outlets of sin, channels of corruption. Some were bad, some vile; but not all were alike, and none were totally depraved. On the contrary, he saw a spark of divinity in every man, whatever his condition. There was a capacity for goodness in each and all. Each man was a diamond in the rough, needing polishing and development. Every one is an angel, in a block of stone, uncut and unhewn.

Let no one conclude, however, that Christ ignored or minimized sin. No one ever recognized its reality and its turpitude more than He. He simply did not overlook goodness. He began with what men had and what they were, and asked them by divine help to make the most of themselves. He appealed, not more to what men were than what they might become. Always, and everywhere he appealed to them, not as reprobates or libertines, but men. He regarded no man as hopeless or irrecoverable. He won responses from the most unpromising. He made saints out of men who at the beginning were little more than savages.

Responsibility, in his judgment, depends on capability. Decision always lies in the will. He asks men to do good and be good, because they can. If willing, any one can and may. If unwilling, he can, but simply will not. Men are not passive or inert, as are stones, but active. To be or not to be is the question in matters moral, and each man must settle it for himself, and he settles it in his own will. We are neither dead volitionally, nor bound arbitrarily. Certainly the will is impaired, but not destroyed. We are neither tied by decree nor shackled by

necessity. Each man knows, experimentally that he is as free in matters moral as material. Without capability there is no responsibility. If man is dead he is both irresponsible and irresponsible. If dead, it is nonsense to appeal to his will and mockery to bid him move. It is needless to repeat that Christ recognized man's autonomy and called out human Initiative.

I remark second: Salvation, as described by Christ, is not a single instantaneous act, but a regulated process. It is not an importation from without, but a gradual evolution within. By many, however, it is regarded as a sudden influx, or immediate change. In some quarters men talk of getting religion as of getting a suit of clothes. It is a sort of garment which one may put on and off as he does his hat or his coat. It is a sort of imported commodity that may lie around loose. It is not life, but a thing apart from life. It is a tangible deposit, handed down from heaven, and may be received as one receives a Christmas gift. It is commonly supposed that one must agonize to get it, and when it comes it comes either like a thunder bolt, or as snow falling from heaven. It is thought to have already been wrought out by something already done, and may be received by a single act of faith. One needs only to believe and the work is done, and henceforth he may rest on his oars. It is a sudden revolution or surgical operation wrought by another. Man's part is simply submission and trust. It comes to most men as to Saul, when he was struck blind and unhorsed. It may be a sudden surprise; or one may have to agonize and wait long. He will know, however, when he has it, by feeling flighty and sentimental. He will show others he has it by contempt for everything except bibles and churches and praying and religious gatherings. This delineation of the common view of salvation may seem somewhat severe, but it cannot be more severe than the view is senseless.

Christ taught that salvation is a regulated process. It is not an importation from without; but a development within. It is not something added onto life, but a cultivation and maturing of life itself. It is not something against nature, or different from nature, but a fulfillment of man's higher nature. It is not a gratuitous commodity received ab extra, but an end attained ab intra through growth. We reach salvation, according to Christ, by pass-

ing through the divine curriculum. It is a subjection and commitment of one's self to divine discipline. It is an awakening and drawing out of the soul by and under divine influence. It is entering on a normal life and struggling to live a real life. It is man finding himself and coming to his real, higher self. It is opening himself to a diviner life and giving himself to its attainment by a divine method. It is dying to the lower that he may live to the higher. It is being born from above and sacrificing all else in the interest of one's real selfhood.

The process of salvation, therefore, is one of counteraction and evolution. We are saved spiritually, as we are physically and mentally. We are saved to physical health by counteracting disease and complying with the conditions of health. We are saved mentally by observing the laws of the mind, and displacing ignorance by replacing it with knowledge. We get neither health nor knowledge as a gift. Nor, do they come in a day. We are delivered from sin by displacing it with righteousness. We must sacrifice and crucify the lower self on the cross of self denial. We save our lives by losing the things which would destroy them, and observing laws which make life possible. Life is neither an infusion nor a gift, but a growth. It comes by conforming to the principles of life and fulfilling the conditions of living. We reach it only by traveling the path of self denial and self sacrifice. We are saved by the cross of Christ only when we take up our own cross and follow him. We are saved by the sacrifice of Christ, only when we sacrifice self as Christ, and for Christ.

I remark third: The road to life is through death. Only as the lower dies is the higher born. There is no gain without loss, or salvation without sacrifice. The law of the natural world is the same here as the spiritual. Christ's principle finds verification in all realms. Scientists tell us only by losing its life the cell saves it. The seed must die or there can be no harvest. The blossom must go that the fruit may come. This great principle threads every department of thought and life. There can be no success without self denial. The business man, the scholar, the athlete and the soldier must pass through Christ's curriculum. All progress, industrial, social, intellectual and moral is the fulfillment of this law. Everywhere the cross is a symbol of sacrifice and the condition of all achievement. Every step the race has taken forward

has been through struggle. As nations have suffered they have prospered. Ease always emasculates, and self indulgence destroys. Men, as multitudes come to their height only by taking up the cross.

Modern Europe has emerged from the middle ages with throes of agony. England was born in the sore travail of Elizabeth's day. Our own nation sprang from the loins of our martyred sons. Humanity has fought its way up, at the point of the bayonet. Every achievement in the history of the world has been baptised with blood. Man could not have come to his height in a paradise of ease. Such a state may have been suitable for the race in its infancy, but the goal of the modern man is in the future. The face of the twentieth century is turned toward the morning.

It is a noteworthy fact that Christ made no moan over a lost Eden. He taught that each man may make his own Eden. A paradise of ease, where the race would have remained ignorant of good and evil, without exertion or hardship, would have been a calamity. Undeveloped savagery and puerility may suit children. To an ambitious, struggling man, a paradise of stagnation would be hell. The price of all real-life is suffering. The road that leads to the stars is steep. Who would live must die that he may live. Christ blazed the path and pointed the way. He worked the process and showed man how it may be worked. He asks each man to make the experiment. Who finds life, therefore, must follow him to the cross. Only through death we enter life.

"Heaven is not reached at a single bound;
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round."

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF SIN?

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth He any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own passions. Then, when his passions have conceived they bring forth sin; and sin when it is finished brings forth death.—James 1:13-15.

SIN is a subject which no man can hope to exhaust in a single discourse, no matter what his scholarship and ability, or what the resourcefulness and receptivity of his audience. Such is the vastness of its scope and the ability necessary to its successful treatment that I approach the task which I have set for myself this morning, with a deep sense of my inability; and I could wish the task were committed to abler hands. Would that I had the splendid diction of a McCauley, the fine analytical ability of a Frederick Robertson, the deep spiritual insight of a Phillips Brooks, or the logical acumen of a Henry Ward Beecher, that I might do justice to this great theme. The most I can hope to do, however, within the brief time allotted to me is to stimulate inquiry and start thoughts, and, leading you to the shore of the great surging sea of sin, bid you look out upon its great expanse, which stretches away into illimitable blackness and darkness.

Sin is the one dark blot on the fair name of humanity. It is the one foul stream which has flowed through all history. It is the one venomous sting which has poisoned the fountains of life and embittered all human experience. We hear the moan of this dreadful calamity through all literature. If Aristophanes would persuade us that this is the gayest possible world, Sophocles would have us know that we stand amid the debris of broken homes, wrecked lives, shattered hopes and bleeding hearts. If Catullus, with his optimistic philosophy, would fling a wreath of roses over the ulcerous Roman life, Juvenal, with his mordant satire would lay bare the diseased conditions of human society, and would have us believe

that Roman society is representative of social conditions everywhere, and in all ages. Sin has always been a dark shadow on human life. As the goddess who came to Thebes could be tracked by the blessings which she left in her path, so the influence of sin may be tracked through the centuries by the death and destruction it has left in its wake. It is the great catastrophe in human experience, about which philosophers have dreamed and poets have sung; and the one dreadful tragedy over which men and angels have wept.

With all its ravages, however, there are some who would have us believe that sin is not a reality. It is but a figment of the imagination and a fancy of the human reason. It does not exist in reality, but only in terms. The unreasonableness of this view is seen in the very bitterness of human experience; and the reality of sin is demonstrated in its very destructiveness. One needs only to open his eyes and look about him to see that for some strange reason things are out of joint. Life is filled with bitterness and sorrow. The fondest hopes are sometimes blighted. The happiest homes sometimes ruined and the most stalwart characters sometimes wrecked by a single sin.

The author of this passage of scripture was combating a most pernicious error. There were those in his time who disclaimed any responsibility for their sins, and sought to absolve themselves by charging their wrong doing upon God. They held that they sinned, not because they wanted to, but because they were forced to. They were tempted by God and led astray by extraneous forces, over which they had no control. James denounced this view of life in terms as scathing as they are uncompromising. Man, in his judgment, is not a machine. No one can truthfully say that he is tempted to sin by God, since this would be inconsistent, both with his nature and his purpose. God is incapable of being tempted to do evil, and such is his nature that he could not and would not tempt man to do so. The true origin of sin, therefore, must be sought elsewhere than in God or man's constitutional inability. Its real seat and source is in man's own passions. He is enticed through his own thoughts and drawn by his own inclinations. When his thought conceives, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

I remark first: God is not the author of sin. Whatever may be its origin, or the causes which produce it, certain it is, God neither influences us to sin nor made us so we cannot avoid sinning. There are some, however, who would absolve man from the responsibility of wrong doing by charging it upon God. They maintain that man is a creature of necessity and a tool of circumstances. He is the product of environment, and a puppet caught in the whirling wheels of a huge machine. He is but a plaything in the hands of brainless, soulless, inexorable law. So far from being able to settle the issues of life by his own choice, he is within the grip of extraneous forces, over which he has absolutely no control. He did not create himself, and therefore, is not responsible for what he is. Nor did he come into the world through any choice of his own, and therefore, is not responsible for what he does. His liberty has been made impossible by decrees which were formed in eternity, with which he had absolutely nothing to do. He is but a projectile shot forth by a divine fiat, and is compelled to describe a calculating course, swerving never an inch from the original divine purpose. He pursues fixed lines of action, not because he wants to, but because he must. He can only follow the course which has already been blocked out for him. His acts were fore-ordained before he was born, and whatever comes to pass in his life was predestinated. There is a compulsion in his constitution and a fatalistic necessity in his circumstances. He is but a weather vane, bandied about by the whims of providence, and a shuttle-cock, controlled all together by extraneous influences.

It needs little insight to see that this view is more an evasion than an argument. It makes God a heartless tyrant, who gloats over the waywardness and wrong doing of prodigal man. It makes life a game of chance, where chaos seems to be preferred to character. It makes man a machine, instead of a master and an autocrat, and accords to him less autonomy and dignity than the most insignificant animal. It makes the universe a great mill, the only aim of which is to grind men to powder, and passing through its curriculum, they are crushed instead of crowned.

This is fatalism, as bald as it is damning, and as gross as it is destructive. It is an apology for sin and a subterfuge for escape. Nothing would be more pleasing

than to shift the responsibility of ones' sins, once one had committed them. It would be an easy means of escape if we could find absolution through constitutional inability.

This error is as dangerous as it is prevalent. It is grounded on a false assumption, both as to the character of God and the nature of man. On the one hand, it overlooks God's goodness and justice; and on the other, man's moral freedom and responsibility. Even in our enlightened day, this fatalistic view is not without its advocates. It has been buttressed, not less by a false theology than by the sophistry of a materialistic philosophy. Multitudes have entrenched themselves behind it and have sought thus to escape both from the responsibility and penalty of wrong doing.

Over against this false view I set the invincible logic of this text. I repeat, God is not the author of sin. Nor, is any man forced to sin. It is not reasonable to suppose that God made man so he must sin. It would be inconsistent with His nature. Nothing is more heinous in his sight than sin; and it is the one thing in all the universe which has sent a pang into His loving heart. It is inconsistent with His purpose. Sin is just the thing He would most studiously avoid, and now that it is a fact, it is the one thing from which He is doing His utmost to save men. Had it been His purpose that man should sin, it would now be His purpose that he should be damned. It will be seen the one is as inconsistent as the other. Although, however, He did not make man so he must sin, He did make man so he could sin. Without the power to sin, man could not be a moral being. If he could not sin, he might be a machine, but not a man. His dignity, therefore, lies in his moral freedom. His greatness does not lie in his sinning, but in the power to sin. If he could not sin, neither could he do good, for the same freedom and ability which enables him to do the one also enables him to do the other. It is the abuse of his ability and the prostitution of his liberty that makes him a sinner.

I remark second: Man is the author of his own sin. He does what he knows to be wrong, not because he has to, but because he wants to. Being a free agent he may do either right or wrong. He chooses his own lines of procedure and follows certain courses of action, in obedience to his own will. He is endowed with the ability

to discern between good and evil. He is not forced to do one instead of the other; but if he acts at all, he must do one or the other.

What is sin? Sin is the deliberate, conscious, intentional choice of a wrong course. It is doing wrong, knowingly and willfully. It is preferring bad to good, and choosing bad instead of good. We settle the issues of life in our own conscience and will. Obedience to right brings good, disobedience evil. We stand at the parting of the ways. In every act we obey or disobey according to our own desire.

Whatever may be thought of the old story of Eden, it is verified in every human life. One may not believe in its literal history, but he must concede the truth of its experimental testimony. We stand before the tree of the knowledge of good and evil almost every hour. As with Adam, so with us, the questions of life and death are settled by our choices. We may demolish Eden by wrong doing, or dress and keep the garden of life by doing right. The tragedy of Eden is repeated in every sin. Certainly, there is no real garden nor actual trees, nor talking serpent; but there is forbidden fruit, of which we are commanded not to eat, and which if we do eat, we experience the bitterness of sin. God's warning voice beats on the ear of every son of Adam, and he may stand or fall, according to his own desire, when facing any critical issue of life. Any man may have fruits and flowers or thorns and thistles, if he chooses. Our sin, therefore cannot be charged to Adam. Each man has his own Eden, and he may keep it or despoil it. The same passions and appetites which prompted the first man to sin still prompt men today. Original sin in our nature there may be, and this may have been handed down, as some think, from the first pair, but actual sin there certainly is, every time a man disobeys the law of right.

I remark third: The genesis of sin is found in man's desires and passions. He is enticed through his thoughts and drawn away through his inclinations. Sin is always first an inward desire, before it can be an outward act. We always want to sin before we do sin. The purpose to do wrong is first matured in the thought, and afterward passes into act. The desire to sin must be stimulated before the plan, according to which we sin, is formulated. Let no one suppose, however, that a man is culpable

because he possesses desires and appetites. If he did not possess them, he would be emasculated.

Time was when men sought to eradicate their appetites instead of striving to educate them. Hence it was that invalidism was thought to be synonymous with religion. By as much as man was sickly and emaciated, by so much he was pious and consecrated; but we now know that he is of the greatest spiritual force who possesses the most vigorous animality, provided his passions and appetites are directed and controlled by his reason. The gymnasium has been set over against the church, and muscularity is recognized as fundamental to morality and manliness. We are not asked to destroy our appetites and passions, but to control them. We sin, then, only when we mature the desire in thought and gratify it in act. Who, therefore, would safeguard his life must guard his thoughts. On this great truth Christian Science has laid special emphasis. Although I am not a Christian Scientist, and there is much in this cult which I do not endorse, yet every intelligent man must confess that it has a basis in fact. To this rapidly growing faith and the new psychology of our time, we owe much for their emphasis upon the profound truth that thought rules the world. We must kill sin in embryo. We must keep the seed of evil from germinating in the soil of thought if we would prevent a crop of noxious growths. We must keep the eggs of wrong out of the nest of our minds if we would not hatch out a brood of vultures. It is useless to deal with effects and go on ignoring causes. Until we purify the source and keep it pure, the stream will always be muddy.

It is significant that every sin has its history and development from its inception to its maturity. The steps from its origin to its maturity may be marked. We are neither caught in the clutches of a demon nor knocked down by a thunder bolt. No man is dragged into sin without warning or opportunity for resistance. He is drawn away of his own passions and enticed by his own desires. We pass under the hypnotic spell of sin by degrees. We are charmed as by a serpent. We are enticed as by one who woos. We are captured as the angler captures the fish, or decoyed as the fowler the bird. But our autonomy is seen and felt at every step. We may

prevent the inception, the development or the consummation of any sin.

When sin is finished its last stage is death. When matured, it is as destructive as it is awful. It stabs the soul and poisons the fountains of life. It dethrones reason and conquers the centers of man's being. Sweeping down into life, and out into conduct, it destroys homes, sheds blood and leaves wreck and ruin in its wake. When it is finished, it brings forth death. Death to holiness and happiness. Death to usefulness and service. Death to the joy of the present and to all hope for the future. Death to home and health, love and friendship, peace and purity. History teems with examples of its awful ravages. It was finished when Eden was despoiled, and failing to appreciate his privileges and rise to the dignity of his situation man lost his footing and went forth to be a vagabond and a wanderer. It was finished when the antediluvian world was deluged, and because of their wickedness an infant race was all but wiped from the face of the earth. It was finished when Greece gave herself over to idolatry and laid the wealth of her civilization, her art, her literature and her learning on the altar of paganism. It was finished when Rome steeped herself in sensuality, and dedicating her marshal splendor to shame and brutality, the scream of her eagles on land and sea became a synonym for crime. It was finished when France swung off into the maelstrom of atheism and wickedness, and burning the bible as a denunciation of its teaching, her people bowed down in worship to a harlot and wrote over the doors of her temples, death is an eternal sleep.

Sin has baptised the world with tears. It has imbittered life. It has dug the grave of a thousand hopes. It has strewn the shores of time with wreck and ruin. Man need not be told that he needs a savior. There is a path upward and out from that which damns. God's great heart bleeds and yearns for every wandering man. It was to show us God's heart that Christ came to the world, and it was his mission to save from sin. The path that leads to the stars He marked out, and with open arms He beckons men upward.

WHAT WAS THE MISSION OF CHRIST?

I am come that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly.—John 10:10.

THE mission of Christ has not always been fully understood. The necessity for the incarnation is not yet quite clear in the minds of some. Even those who should know the subject best, and whose business it is to expound this great doctrine have not always made themselves clear. Notwithstanding the great influx of light which has come as the result of careful, devout study, the notion as to why Christ came is as confused as it is confusing. This confusion, in all probability, is due to the angle from which men have looked, and the view point from which they have approached the subject. Such is the breadth of the subject, and such the variety of its aspects that even the scriptures are not altogether agreed touching its nature. When we have read the new testament through, we are still at sea as to any definite conception of the mission of Christ. His mission is variously described by the authors of the gospels, and different aspects of it are emphasized by the authors of the epistles. It is impossible to judge as to its character from the teachings of any single book, or to determine its nature from the content of any isolated passage. It is said in one place that He came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. In another place it is said He came, not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. When asked why He associated with the outcast the answer was that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Elsewhere we are told that He came to found a kingdom, and that His mission was to vindicate the truth and expound and exemplify the principles of righteousness. In one of the epistles, and from the pen of one of the ablest exponents of christianity, we are told that He came to be a mediator between God and man, and, teaching men the way of life while He lived, He finally made salvation possi-

ble by His death on the cross. In the passage before us it is stated that He came that men might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

It is the effect His coming has had upon human life with which we are concerned at this hour. Whatever else He came for, the main thing about which he was most concerned was how men ought to live. Until His advent the conception of life had been a most narrow one. Men had lived, but only a few had lived the more abundant life. They had little conception of its divineness or its dignity. He came to give men a more exalted idea of life and to impress them with the transcendent possibilities and privileges of true living.

If human life is rightly understood, it is the greatest blessing God ever conferred upon man; but if misunderstood, it may be a most intolerable burden or most dreadful tragedy. There are men and women who go moping through the world, thinking it a sin to really live. The joys and privileges of the more abundant life are neither understood nor appreciated. They eke out the barest existence because they do not know the real meaning of life.

I remark first: Christ came to dignify and glorify human life. More than any other great leader of men He showed the divineness of living, and exemplified the principles of life in His own conduct. A little reflection will show that the whole aim of our present existence is that we may attain to the fullness of life. Life is the highest end that can be sought by God or man. It is the genius of all creation, and the goal of all human effort. It is the one high and holy end to which all else is incidental, and is, itself, fundamental to all else. The highest form of earthly existence is human life. The animal exists, but does not really live. The tree possesses vitality and occupies space, but has no conscious life. Man, alone, really lives, for he, alone, knows the meaning of life. God is concerned with all life, but chiefly with the life of man. More than any other object of creation, man must be nurtured and stimulated. The tree lives without cultivation or protection. It grows on some mountain side, amid the rocks and crags, battling with the storm all alone, or it comes up in the heart of some primeval forest and blossoms and bears its fruit, without any help from the hand of man. The animal asks for no

cradle, for it needs none, and it is rocked by no kind hand. It asks for no school, and it waits for no organized method of obtaining knowledge. It asks for no bible or church. But man must be rocked and protected, taught and led.

Christ came because man needed God close by his side, as the child needs the mother. It is no more strange that God should stoop to help His inexperienced prodigal children than that the mother should nurture and protect her inexperienced child. As a matter of fact, no creature is born so far away from maturity as man. The insect is born today and tomorrow is grown, and soon dies. The maturity of the bird dwells close beside the nest. The ox asks for but three summers that it may attain its growth; while the burden bearing elephant wants only ten years. But man begins so far away that he wants four score years to begin to live, and must have a limitless eternity in which to reach full orb'd manhood.

It is a noteworthy fact that growth is no where so slow as in morals. Most of the life is spent before men really learn to do right. We learn the art of right living as we learn to walk or talk or sing. It is because of the long distance man travels that he needs teachers. Homes and schools, libraries and galleries must be established for his development. Friendships and temptations, defeats and victories are also instruments of progress. Speaking reverently, God could not live apart from man and educate him. In the abstract He might influence him, but to lead him and educate him efficiently, He must come into concrete form. He must come to him as the mother comes to the child, and the teacher to the pupil. He must become his companion, his guide, his helper. Books inspire, but not like heart beats. Precepts thrill, but not like the eye and hand of a sympathetic teacher.

It was to glorify and dignify human life that Christ became human. He lived like we do to show us how to live. He showed us how divine human life is and how much more divine it may become. He taught that each man has in him a divinity that links him onto God. Each human sphere has about it a sacredness that makes it fit even for God to live in. Life, in the conception of Christ, is in no sense low or mean. Man can do no greater thing than to live a true, clean, upright, manly life. Living is a transcendent privilege. To be a true man is to be only

a little lower than God. Christ's idea of life was the most exalted the world has known. There was no place for cynicism or misanthropy in His conception. Whoever, therefore, cheapens or depreciates life is a criminal. Who teaches that human existence is a tragedy and the sooner we get out of this world the better, is a misanthrope and an enemy to man.

I remark second: Christ came to lead men into a more abundant life. He taught that men should put all into and get all out of life they can. It is not meant, however, that men may be voluptuaries, or libertines. Liberty in the use of blessings is in no sense license to abuse them. There is a vast difference between volition and voluptuousness. Sensuality and sanity are in no sense the same. Nothing is more unchristian than self indulgence. Christ was neither a Sybarite nor an Epicure. Unfortunately, the swing here is too often to the extreme. Men imagine they may indulge themselves as they please, because they can. They conclude nothing is wrong which they have the liberty to do. Many, therefore, choose promiscuously, and indulge themselves indiscriminately, but that freedom which is unrestrained and unbridled is always dangerous. Liberty lies within the limits of law. In a world like this we cannot live without restraint. No man has the right to live as he pleases, or to have all he wants.

Nor, is it meant on the other hand that we are to eke out a bare existence. There is no virtue in poverty. Religion is not crawling through the world. If Christ was not a Sybarite nor an Epicure, neither was he a Stoic or an ascetic. He never looked upon the world as a wilderness, nor life as a tragedy.

There are some people in the world who are actually afraid to live with any enthusiasm for fear they will do wrong. They stand off from the pleasures of life for fear they will sin. Such people confine themselves to the bare necessities. They seek barrenness instead of abundance. They miss the best of life because they are afraid to live. To avoid prodigality they eat the simplest food and wear the plainest clothes, thinking thus to be christian. This is to swing to the opposite extreme. Christ opened the gates of life and asked men to use and enjoy the blessings of the world. He taught that this is God's world and we are His children. He has supplied our wants with a lavish hand. He has filled the world with beauty and

utility. He has made food for the body and beauty for the eye. He has provided problems for the mind and incentives for the soul. There is room here for the exercise of all our faculties and powers. There is no reason for supineness and stagnation. Our endowments are great and our means are adequate. The world is an arena and life a university and we have eternity before us. He is a cynic and an ingrate who does not appreciate life. Every blessing is a divine wish. Every day is a golden opportunity. Every privilege is a trembling possibility.

The coming of Christ gave life new meaning. He stooped to our level that He might put Himself in our place. He carried our griefs and became acquainted with our sorrows. He sweetened the experiences of life by showing us how to be patient. He cleansed life of bitterness and cynicism by teaching us to love. More than any other great benefactor He preached peace and good will to men. Amid circumstances of greatest friction He carried Himself with ease and equanimity. He lightened the burdens of the weary and the heavy laden by cheering their hearts. He sent a thrill pulsing through the souls of the down-cast by inspiring them with hope. He made difficulties flee by disarming fear. He made the world a better and a happier place to live in. He oiled the bearings of life and made right living easier. He gave Himself that men might live. He came that men might have more abundant life.

"Children of yesterday,
Heirs of tomorrow,
What are you weaving?
Labor and sorrow?
Look to your looms again,—
Faster and faster
Fly the great shuttles
Prepared by the master.
Life is in the loom,
Room for it,—Room!"

WHAT IS RELIGION?

Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep yourself unspotted from the world.—James 1:27.

RELIGION has ever been a matter of deepest concern to men in all ages. It is a matter of vital interest, both in christian and heathen lands. It is of importance, not more to the theologian than to the average man; and it concerns men in all professions, all callings and all stations of life. It does not belong any more to the churches, the schools of theology, the class room, or theological seminaries, or sabbath schools than to any other spheres of life; and it may be understood and experienced as well by the peasant as the philosopher. Such are the practical aspects of its nature, and such the frequency with which it has been discussed that men, everywhere, are familiar with its contents. It is being discussed as freely and studied as thoughtfully today by the pew as by the pulpit. It does not occupy a unique place of its own, but is a matter of common interest to all. The word religion is used only a few times in the scriptures. When used, it does not carry with it the larger meaning with which it has since been invested. Although the word is seldom used, religion is the theme of the whole bible. It runs like a golden thread through the whole book, and is the one dominant note which sounds from Genesis to Revelation. It was the theme of the patriarchs wherever they erected their altars, and all their early struggles to live right were but rudimental efforts to embody and exemplify the principles of righteousness. The prophets sounded the same note, and everywhere pointed out that righteousness exalts a nation as also individuals. The gospels are but so many commentaries upon the same subject. They lifted before the world the Christ who came to teach men how to live, and whose teaching and example constitute the best exposition of right living the world has

known. The epistles of the new testament are likewise brilliant attempts of the followers of Christ to elucidate the same theme, and the thought uppermost in their minds was how men ought to carry themselves in relation to God and their fellow men.

The contents of religion are no where set forth more beautifully than in the sermon on the mount.

Who ever would be religious must be pure in heart, for only the pure in heart shall see God. Peace makers make the world a better and happier place for men to live in, and make men better and happier in the world. To hunger and thirst after righteousness is the highest ambition that can animate the human soul. Men should let their lights shine that others seeing their good works may glorify the Father in Heaven. If one possesses the right spirit, he will love his enemies and do unto others as he would have them do unto him. Purity of life within and uprightness of life without are fundamental to religion. No man can be religious who is not good in his character and upright in his conduct.

I remark first: Religion is an upright life. It is not something apart from life. Least of all is it something added onto life. Some think to be religious one must step out from life and live apart from daily duty. Men wait, therefore, to be religious, as they do to become rich, as if to be religious one must do something extra. They defer right living as if they needed a special occasion to do right. Strange as it seems, they think that religion is something different from doing plain duty. They associate it with special times and places, as if these were fundamental to piety. They think it requires a different mood, and more time than ordinary living. Religion in this view is a sort of addendum to life. It is something over and above ordinary duties. On the one hand one may be religious and neglect ordinary duties. On the other hand, one may perform faithfully all the ordinary duties of life, and yet not be religious. They hold that religion moves in the sphere of the sacred, and is something apart from ordinary life. Ordinary life moves in the sphere of the secular and is something different from religion. Life is distraction while religion is devotion. One may live amid confusion but cannot be devout amid distraction. The battle for bread is too strenuous and secular for piety. One must wait until he comes away from the street for prayer. He must wait

until he goes to the church to be devout. He must wait for more time and another place to be religious. Prayer and devotion belong to a different sphere and atmosphere to that of the pulsating, busy, bustling world.

But religion is not a luxury. It is not a supplement to life, nor a thing apart from life. It is not something we may have in addition to life. It is not a boon we may enjoy when through business. One cannot go home from his store or shop or office and put it on, as he does his clothes. It is not a mood or habit of life, peculiar to the church or the sabbath day. It is not praying or singing hymns. It is not reading the bible or attending services. It is not taking communion or hearing sermons. These things are but incidents in a religious life, the means to an end.

What is religion? Religion is an upright life, lived anywhere and every day. It is being right and doing right always and under all circumstances. It is keeping ones self pure, being kind, walking uprightly, dealing honestly with God and man. It is doing the best for yourself, helping others and making the world better and happier. It is doing the best you can in your own place and in your own way. It is being the same in the store that you are in the church. It is being as devout at your own table as at the communion table. It is being as pious when engaged in business as when engaged in prayer. It is being as religious when reading the daily paper as when reading the bible.

"I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty,
I woke and found that life was Duty,
Was thy dream then a shadowy lie?
Toil on, poor heart, unceasingly
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A truth and noonday light to thee."

I remark second: Religion is being good. It is keeping one's self clean, and safeguarding the character of one's inner life. Character is at once the chief aim, and the best evidence of religion. There is something finer in any of us than anything we do or say. Religion goes behind living to the causes of life. It deals with the motives behind the action and notes the purposes that rule within. It tests the stream by its source, and the expression of life by the life expressed. The quality of character is always more important than the quantity of the acts

making it up. It is not what you do so much as what you are which is most vital. The quantity of one's life may be large but the quality poor. We must have life before there can be living; and character before there can be conduct. Goodness, therefore, means the sort of man one is, not the size. It is not diameter we want, but fineness of fiber. Religion means improvement of type. The fountains of action must be purified and the enginery of life overhauled. Our faculties and powers must be kept in health and harmony. The whole of living must be transformed without, because all of life is purified within.

Fundamentally, religion means self improvement and self preservation. To be religious is to make the most of one's self. It is to be one's best and do one's best. It is to keep from all that harms and injures. It is to seek all that enlarges and blesses. It is to preserve and improve one's entire selfhood in the fullest sense. We should avoid sin, therefore, as we avoid disease, and for the same reason. We should seek moral as we seek physical health, and seek it for its immense worth. We should decide what spots us morally, just as we do what makes us sick, physically. Things that bless we should use freely. Things that blight we should let alone. Every man is supposed to know how to take care of his health, and he should know better than any one else what makes him sick, physically. Each one may know what spots him morally, and should avoid what injures and hurts. To be religious is to be your real self. It is to fulfill the bent of one's higher nature. Every one should aspire to the best he knows anything about. He should do the best he knows how. One should be true to himself, true to God, true to his fellow men. Angels and gods can do no more.

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

I remark again: Religion is doing good. It is making the world a better place to live in and men and women better and happier in the world. Doing good is the practical, social side of religion. Religious life is in no sense a self centered life. We are not good simply that we may conserve our own interests. So far from being religious when selfish, selfishness destroys just that which religion aims to promote. We are blessed in blessing others. We

are blessed because we bless others. It is the stream that runs that moves wheels and makes meadows. It is the engine that draws loads and propels machinery that adds wealth to a nation. It is the tree that bears fruit that does not cumber the ground. It is the man who helps others to live who really lives. That goodness which does not make itself felt amounts to little. Faith without works is dead. Belief without life has neither back bone nor meaning. Life, to be helpful, must express itself in living. The tree, to be useful, must show itself by its fruits.

The world needs a religion that makes it better and happier. Of innocent, sentimental goodness we have enough. The world has been surfeited on a piety that prides itself on loyalty to creed. Dogmas must be melted into deeds, and creeds must be incarnated in conduct. More than anything else we want a sane, manly, robust, practical businesslike religion, which is dominated by the spirit of Christ. We want a religion that makes itself felt, and that tells on the lives of others. We want a religion of kind deeds and philanthropic effort. We want a religion which is not only fervent in spirit, but diligent in business. We want a religion which is as earnest as the needs of men are imperative. A religion that gives every man a chance. A religion that helps the man who is down, and lightens the burdens of the weak. A religion that gives every man a square deal. A religion that throws the mantle of charity over common weakness and sends new hope pulsing through the soul of the hopeless. We want a religion that helps the helpless widow in her struggles. A religion that guides the feet of the orphan and helps fatherless children up in the world. A religion that makes the rough places of life smooth and helps men on and up, as they climb toward the stars. A religion that makes the lives of men purer and richer. A religion that makes homes happier and firesides warmer.

"The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close knit strands of an unbroken thread,
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpets, ring no bells,
The book of life no shining record tells.
Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life-working. A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad;
A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest."

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